



FOUNDATION FOR  
APPALACHIAN OHIO  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT

For a Flourishing  
Appalachian Ohio

## Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.

That proverb traces its roots back to 14th-century England, yet it couldn't be more relevant to FAO today.

Over the past 25 years, the acorns planted by our visionary founders and nurtured by our community of givers have grown to:

- **\$133 million in charitable assets and more than 700 funds;**
- **16,000 grants and scholarships totaling \$43 million; and**
- **All 32 counties supported by a local foundation.**

Because of your generosity, hundreds of thousands of Appalachian Ohioans have experienced opportunities previously unavailable to them.

The best way to celebrate a past this impactful is to create a future vision equally transformative – and we've done just that. We invite you to learn more through the QR code below or by visiting our new website: [www.AppalachianOhio.org](http://www.AppalachianOhio.org).

There, you can read about the work of our 15 affiliate foundation partners, learn how next-generation leaders are serving their communities and review the ambitious goals of our Friends of FAO, which is advancing flourishing today while we build endowment to support well-being in perpetuity.

**Thank you** for all you do to create opportunities for the people and communities of Appalachian Ohio! We are forever grateful.



Read about our future vision for advancing a **Flourishing Appalachian Ohio**.



*Cara Dingus Brook*  
Cara Dingus Brook  
President & CEO

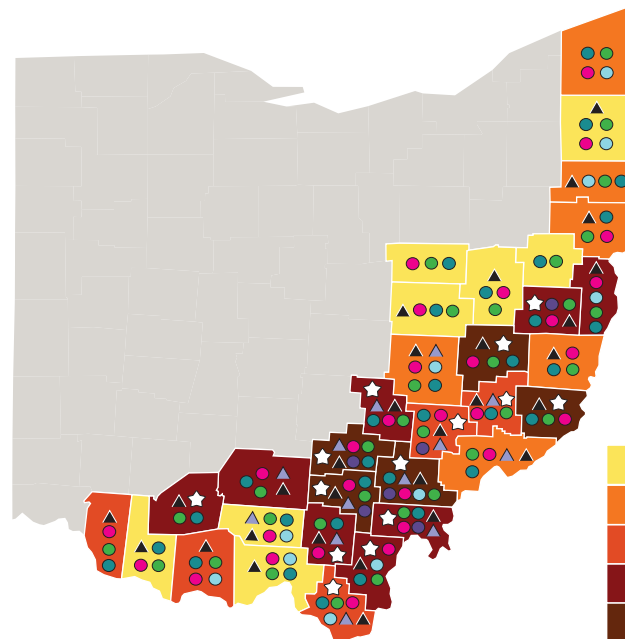


*Ronald Strickmaker*  
Ronald Strickmaker  
Board Chair

## Our mission

Unleashing the collective potential within Appalachian Ohio by encouraging and supporting philanthropy.

## 2024 Impact: Mapping your generosity



**878**  
Grants given overall



**648**  
Scholarships awarded



**32**  
Counties with First Book registrations



**29**  
Counties with Growing Home Fellows



Affiliate Foundations



Grant Recipients



Youth-Led Grants



Growing Home Fellows



Scholarship Recipients



AACF Grants



First Book Registrations



Mobile Vision Clinic Visits



**15**  
Affiliate foundations, including the region-wide African American Community Fund



**15**  
African American Community Fund grants



**13**  
Counties visited by mobile vision clinic, covering 29 school districts and summer program sites



**9**  
Youth-led grants

## Answering the call to lead and serve

Young leaders are essential to flourishing communities. Our Growing Home Fellowship has recruited and retained 100+ young leaders and given them a stake in the future of our region as the next generation of community builders and leaders. In 2024, the fellows began implementing service projects across our communities. Some are serving in existing organizations, supporting 80+ local governments, nonprofits and civic organizations. Others are leading start-up projects, including the new Appalachian Literary Arts & Storytelling Festival. Thanks to the generosity of donors, we launched a pitch competition in 2024 through which fellows secured funding for their service projects and gained fundraising skills for future success.



View our **Growing Home Fellowship Impact Report** and read about the fellows serving in your community.

## Connecting community through the joy of art

Through an investment from our Arts and Culture Pillar of Prosperity, a new nonprofit is receiving support to grow and serve children throughout Appalachian Ohio. The Crafty Bus was started by a visionary mother of three who transformed an old school bus into a mobile arts experience for children. The Crafty Bus brings arts and music activities to children who otherwise might not have access to such opportunities while building stronger and more connected communities through the joy of creative expression. The coming year will see the Crafty Bus visit communities across the region.



**More than 150 children** enjoyed art and music activities through the **Crafty Bus** – and received **take-home art kits** – during the **Morgan Community Fund's 2024 holiday event**.

## A historic investment in our environment and well-being

A new science camp. Habitat restoration for endangered species. A study to determine whether dredge material from our region's inland lakes is suitable for application on reclaimed coal mine lands.

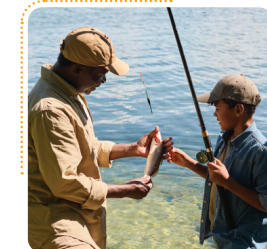


Photo above and on top right of cover courtesy of MWCD

Those are just some of the projects that received new funding in 2024 to advance conservation, environmental stewardship and the greater well-being of our region. It's all thanks to a transformative \$5 million gift and partnership with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District and others, including Nicolozakes Trucking & Construction Inc., Ohio CAT and American Electric Power, who helped to establish our Environmental Stewardship Pillar of Prosperity. Collective giving has grown our Environmental Stewardship Pillar to the level where we are able to make funding like this available across our region annually.



Read about the **\$160,000+** awarded in **environmental stewardship fellowships and community, innovation and research grants**.

## Your generosity in action in 2024



**88 counties**

that will be served through Gov. Mike DeWine's and state legislators' commitment to expand the mobile vision clinic FAO helped to start



**24,600 pounds**

of meat donated for families in Athens, Gallia, Harrison, Hocking, Perry and Vinton counties through our local affiliate foundation partners, with support from Columbia Gas, NiSource Charitable Foundation and Paycor



**\$6+ million awarded**

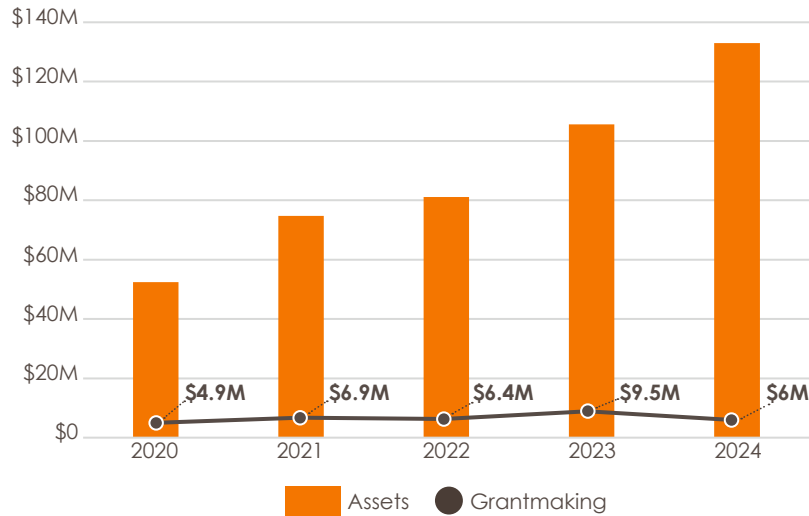
in grants, scholarships and fellowships

## Our vision

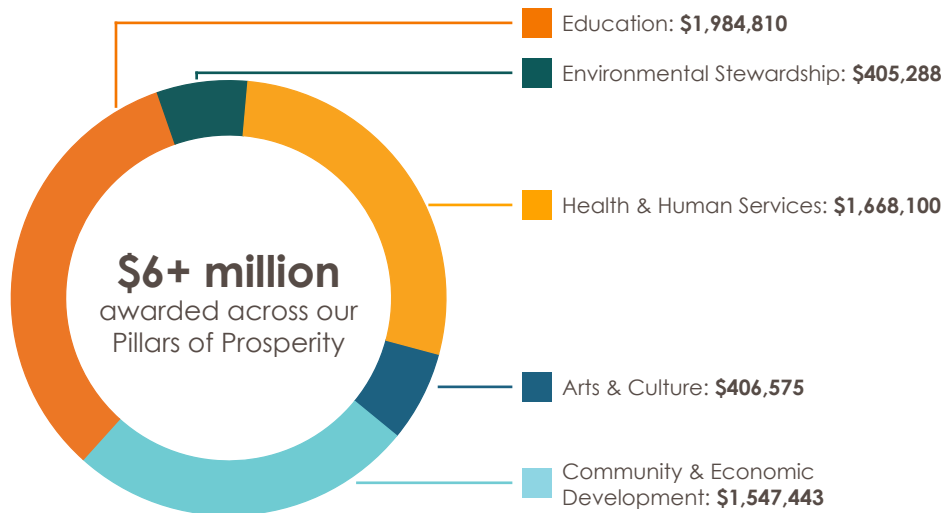
Flourishing people and flourishing communities, today and in perpetuity.

## 2024 FAO financials

### Net asset and grantmaking growth



### 2024 grants by pillar



## An unparalleled life of giving lives on

### Mayor of Somerset. Dreamer. Doer. Innovator. Inspirer.

**Thomas H. Johnson III** taught us one person really can make a difference, today and for years to come. His legacy at FAO includes co-founder of the Community Foundation for Perry County (CFPC), collaborator in our goal to ensure every county in Appalachian Ohio is supported by a local foundation, changemaker who helped secure funding to launch our Growing Home Fellowship and one of the region's greatest champions.



Tom's impact spanned his native Perry County, our region and state. He is pictured with (from left) Tony Fiore, CPFC president; FAO's Cara Dingus Brook; Ohio First Lady Fran and Gov. Mike DeWine; and Sherri Simons, FAO director of outreach.

His unparalleled life of giving lives on in the countless investments he brought into his community and across Appalachian Ohio, the community resources he inspired and his thoughtfully crafted planned gift, which, through CFPC and FAO, will support nine organizations he started or served.

For all of this and so much more, we are honoring Tom posthumously with our *Child of Appalachia*® Award.



Hear the words of wisdom and encouragement Tom shared with our Growing Home Fellows during their inaugural gathering.

## Our affiliate foundation partners

- African American Community Fund
- Gallia Community Foundation
- Guernsey County Foundation
- Harrison County Community Foundation
- Highland County Community Fund
- Hocking County Community Fund
- Jackson County Community Foundation
- Lawrence County Community Foundation
- Meigs County Foundation
- Monroe County Community Foundation
- Morgan Community Fund
- Nelsonville Community Foundation
- Noble County Community Foundation
- Community Foundation for Perry County
- Vinton County Community Fund